BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

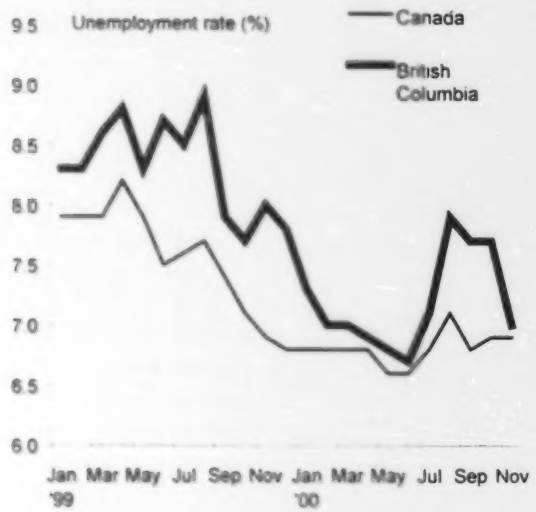
Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations

BRITISH COLUMBIA 2000 Marking The Millennium

Contact: Data Services
Tel: (250) 387-0325
Release: December 28, 2000
Issue: 00-12

Current Statistics ◆ December 2000

BC's unemployment rate dropped in November.



- **British Columbia's unemployment rate dropped 0.7 percentage points between October and November, falling to 7.0% (seasonally adjusted).** The number of people with jobs in the province rose slightly (+0.2%), but the main reason for the lower unemployment rate was that BC's labour force shrank 0.5% (-11,400) during November, so there were fewer people looking for work.

  Nationally, a 0.4% net gain in the size of the labour force was absorbed by a similar increase (+0.4%) in employment, keeping the unemployment rate unchanged at 6.9%.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **A 1.6% increase in the number of private sector jobs was the reason for BC's modest employment growth last month.** Public sector employment fell 2.9%, ending a 3-month-long growth spurt. At the same time, the number of self-employed British Columbians dropped 1.3% to 351,000. Part-time employment increased 0.6% between October and November, but the number of people working full-time rose only marginally (+0.1%). Among young workers (aged 15-24), the unemployment rate dropped 1.5 percentage points to 14.2%. The jobless rate for those aged 25 and over was 5.6%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC's retail sales fell by 1.1% between September and October (seasonally adjusted), affected by lower sales of motor and recreational vehicle dealers.** A fall in sales in this sector also impacted the rest of Canada, with all provinces reporting retail sales reduced by at least 1.0%. The biggest drops were seen in New Brunswick (-2.7%) and PEI (-2.6%), contributing to a national decline of –0.9%.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **The number of consumer bankruptcies in the province was up again in October.** Consumer bankruptcies have increased at double-digit rates during five of the last six months. There were 858 bankruptcies in October, compared to 724 in the same month last year. BC's 18.5% increase was well above the national average (+5.9%).

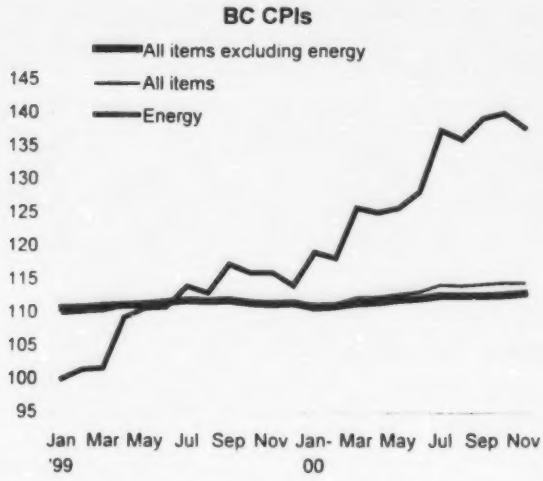
  Leaky condos have undoubtedly contributed to the rise in consumer bankruptcies in the province, but the extent to which they have influenced the bankruptcy figures is unknown. Consumer bankruptcies in the province have been rising steadily, and the average number of bankruptcies each month has more than doubled since 1993. Nationally, consumer bankruptcies also increased during the mid-1990s, but have been trending down since 1998. The number of consumer bankruptcies in all of Canada is currently about 40% higher than in 1993. *Source: Industry Canada data*

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities declined again in October, falling 13.2% (seasonally adjusted).** The drop was the third in the last four months, reflecting declines in the value of both residential (-16.6%) and non-residential (-10.0%) permits.

Canadian permits were down 6.8% despite more activity in the residential sector, where the value of permits issued rose 5.5%. Permits in the non-residential sector fell 18.4%.

Source: Statistics Canada

CPI driven upwards by soaring energy costs.



- **BC's year-over-year inflation rate jumped to 2.7% in November.** The last time the inflation rate was this high was in the summer of 1995. The brunt of the increase came from the energy sector, where the inflation rate (+18.8%) remained in the high teens, marking the fifteenth consecutive month of double-digit price increases. Excluding energy, the all-items consumer price index (CPI) would have been 1.5% higher than in November 1999. This was also well above the levels seen since the mid-1990s.

  While energy costs were a big factor, the CPI was also affected by higher food prices, which have begun to creep up at the same time that shelter costs are picking up speed after a long period of decline. Until very recently, falling or stagnant food and shelter costs had helped alleviate the inflationary pressure of soaring oil and gas prices.

  Food prices rose (+0.6%) for the first time this year in November. The cost of groceries increased modestly (+0.2%), despite sharply higher prices for fresh vegetables (+7.4%) and vegetable preparations (+5.3%). Restaurant-goers paid 1.5% more for their meals than they did a year ago. Shelter costs were up 2.6%, as BC residents paid 13.4% more for utilities and saw smaller increases in the cost of rented (+0.7%) and owned (+1.1%) accommodation. The transportation index (+6.4%) also reflected the effect of higher prices at the pump. Price increases for other goods and services ranged from 1.3% for alcohol and tobacco products to 2.7% for health and personal care. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **There were 331,869 public sector employees in BC in the third quarter of 2000.** This represents an increase of 1.3% relative to the same quarter last year. The number of general government jobs rose at both the federal (+1.8%) and provincial (+4.0%) levels compared to the same quarter in 1999. The strong increase in BC's provincial general government employment was driven by a rise in employment by agencies that are controlled or funded by government, and not by employment in provincial government administration which fell by 2.2% (to 19,994) in the third quarter.

  The number of people employed in BC's universities and colleges rose by 1.9% in the third quarter of 2000, as did the number employed in health and social service institutions (+1.8%) and school boards (+0.6%). Employment in crown corporations (-1.3%) and local government (-0.4%) however, was down.

  Public sector employment rose in most parts of the country compared to the third quarter of 1999, increasing by 0.7% in Canada overall. The largest percentage increases in the public sector workforce were seen in Alberta (+2.9%) and Manitoba (+2.1%), while the greatest declines were seen in Newfoundland (-2.1%), Nova Scotia (-1.8%) and Quebec (-1.0%).

  Source: Statistics Canada, Public Institutions Division

MONTHLY STATISTICS

	UNITS	REFERENCE PERIOD	CURRENT			MONTHLY AVERAGE YEAR-TO-DATE	
			LATEST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM LAST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO	AMOUNT	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO
PRICES							
Consumer Price Index-BC	1992=100	Nov '00	114.5	0.0	2.7	113.2	1.8
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	1992=100	Nov '00	115.2	0.1	3.1	113.8	2.2
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	1992=100	Nov '00	114.1	0.1	2.4	112.9	1.6
Consumer Price Index-Canada	1992=100	Nov '00	115.0	0.3	3.2	113.4	2.7
Consumer Price Index-USA	1982-84=100	Nov '00	174.1	0.1	3.4	172.0	3.4
Industrial Product Price Index	1992=100	Oct '00	129.1	0.6	4.4	127.3	5.0
LABOUR							
Unemployment Rate (SA)*-BC	Percent	Nov '00	7.0	(7.7)	(8.0)	7.2	(8.4)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-Canada	Percent	Nov '00	6.9	(6.9)	(6.9)	6.8	(7.6)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-USA	Percent	Oct '00	3.9	(3.9)	(4.1)	4.0	(4.3)
Unemployed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Nov '00	147.1	-9.6	-11.2	150.8	-13.2
Employed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Nov '00	1,964.1	0.2	2.5	1,948.0	2.3
Labour Force (SA)-BC	Thousand	Nov '00	2,111.2	-0.5	1.4	2,098.8	1.0
Participation Rate (SA)-BC	Percent	Nov '00	64.9	(65.3)	(64.9)	64.9	(65.1)
Employment Insurance Benefits Paid-BC	$Million	Oct '00	102.3	15.1	3.8	115.4	-9.9
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC***	Dollars	Nov '00	643.16	-0.7	2.2	636.85	2.0
Wages and Salaries-BC	$Million	Sep '00	5,062.4	1.8	7.1	4,896.3	6.3
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index	1986=100	Oct '00	143.2	0.8	1.7	143.2	1.7
PRODUCTION-B.C.							
Lumber-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Oct '00	2,817.3	11.7	-1.4	2,720.5	0.9
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Sep '00	445.0	19.0	-6.9	448.0	9.2
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Sep '00	121	0.0	-1.6	120	6.0
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Sep '00	142	0.0	-6.6	139	5.6
Coal-Tonnes	Thousand	Oct '00	2,205.5	7.9	-0.2	2,114.4	3.9
Oil-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Aug '00	211.8	-8.4	15.2	215.9	10.4
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres	Million	Aug '00	2,173.2	13.2	8.9	2,059.4	0.5
Electric Power Generated	GW.h	Oct '00	5,525.4	2.8	-12.7	5,551.2	-1.5
Manufacturing Shipments (SA)	$Million	Oct '00	3,108.1	-0.4	-2.5	3,213.9	5.3
GENERAL							
Housing Starts-All Areas BC(SAAR)**	Thousand	Nov '00	13.0	-36.6	-33.0	14.5	-9.4
Housing Starts-USA (SAAR)	Thousand	Oct '00	1,532.0	0.1	-6.4	1,612.0	-3.3
Building Permits-BC	$Million	Oct '00	303.2	-16.0	-22.4	387.7	-2.0
Retail Sales (SA)-BC	$Million	Oct '00	2,977.0	-1.1	5.4	2,948.9	5.6
Tourism Room Revenues (SA)-BC	$Million	Feb '00	116,829.0	1.7	1.5	115,867.0	2.1
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Oct '00	85	16.4	10.4	83	-8.8
Exports Originating in BC (SA)	$Million	Sep '00	2,710.1	0.6	11.4	2,651.8	11.9

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*SA indicates seasonal adjustment.

**SAAR indicates seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

***Average Weekly Wage Rate from the Labour Force Survey. This replaces Average Weekly Earnings from the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours.

Brackets () indicate that rates are shown instead of percentage changes.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

	UNITS	YEAR			PERCENT CHANGE	
		1999	1998	1997	1999-1998	1998-1997
PRICES						
Consumer Price Index-BC	1992=100	111.2	110.0	109.7	1.1	0.3
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	1992=100	111.4	110.4	109.8	0.9	0.5
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	1992=100	111.1	110.0	109.7	1.0	0.3
Consumer Price Index-Canada	1992=100	110.5	108.6	107.6	1.7	0.9
Consumer Price Index-USA*	1982-84=100	166.6	163.0	160.5	2.2	1.6
Industrial Product Price Index*	1992=100	121.7	119.4	119.5	1.9	-0.1
LABOUR						
Unemployment Rate-BC	Percent	8.3	8.8	8.4		
Unemployment Rate-Canada	Percent	7.6	8.3	9.1		
Unemployment Rate-USA*	Percent	4.2	4.5	4.9		
Unemployed-BC	Thousand	172.8	181.0	171.3	-4.5	5.7
Employed-BC	Thousand	1,906.4	1,870.2	1,869.0	1.9	0.1
Labour Force-BC	Thousand	2,079.1	2,051.2	2,040.3	1.4	0.5
Participation Rate-BC	Percent	65.1	64.9	65.6		
Employment Insurance Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	1,520.9	1,626.6	1,507.9	-6.5	7.9
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	625.21	618.37	610.69	1.1	1.3
Wages and Salaries-BC*	$Million	55,583.2	54,173.1	53,034.5	2.6	2.1
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index*	1986=100	141.0	141.6	143.3	-0.4	-1.2
PRODUCTION-B.C.						
Lumber-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	31,832.1	30,236.8	31,561.6	0.1	-4.2
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	4,995	4,462	4,532	11.9	-1.5
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	1,380	1,193	1,181	15.7	1.0
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	1,636	1,374	1,468	19.1	-6.4
Coal-Tonnes*	Thousand	24,301.5	25,366.0	27,798.8	0.0	-8.8
Oil-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	2,347.6	2,763.7	2,561.1	-0.2	7.9
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres*	Million	24,635.1	24,117.7	22,734.3	0.0	6.1
Electric Power Generated*	GW.h	68,045.2	67,709.7	66,961.3	0.0	1.1
Solid Mineral Production	$Million	2,598.0	3,025.6	3,130.0	-0.1	-3.3
Farm Cash Receipts**	$Million	1,941.7	1,834.9	1,759.1	5.8	4.3
Manufacturing Shipments*	$Million	36,994.3	33,890.2	34,582.6	9.2	-2.0
GENERAL						
Housing Starts-All Areas BC**	Thousand	16.3	19.9	29.4	-18.2	-32.1
Housing Starts-USA	Thousand	1,666.5	1,616.9	1,474.0	3.1	9.7
Building Permits-BC*	$Million	4,695.9	4,739.6	5,543.8	-0.9	-14.5
Retail Sales-BC*	$Million	33,672.1	33,044.8	33,735.9	1.9	-2.0
Tourism Room Revenues-BC*	$Million	1,328.9	1,206.1	1,157.6	10.2	4.2
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	1,077	1,031	898	0.0	14.8
Exports Originating in BC	$Million	28,693.7	26,044.8	26,760.7	10.2	-2.7
Capital Expenditures-BC	$Million	20,687.6	20,055.2	21,806.6	3.2	-8.0
Population-BC (as of July 1)	Thousand	4,028.1	3,997.5	3,959.7	0.8	1.0

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* derived from monthly figures

**derived from quarterly figures

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT ($ MILLIONS)

	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
	1999	1998	1997	1996	98-99	97-98	96-97
BRITISH COLUMBIA							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	118,783	113,945	113,596	108,454	4.2	0.3	4.7
Real GDP at Market Prices (constant 1992 $)	104,323	102,217	101,277	98,052	2.1	0.9	3.3
CANADA *							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	957,911	901,805	877,921	833,070	6.2	2.7	5.4
Real GDP at Market Prices (constant 1992 $)	880,254	842,002	815,013	780,916	4.5	3.3	4.4
UNITED STATES (Billions $US) **							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	9,299.2	8,790.2	8,318.4	7,813.2	5.8	5.7	6.5
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 1996 $US)	8,875.8	8,515.7	8,159.5	7,813.2	4.2	4.4	4.4

** Preliminary actual 1999, Statistics Canada*
*** US Department of Commerce (actual)*

INTEREST AND EXCHANGE RATES

	Dec 27/00	Dec 20/00	Nov 29/00	Dec 29/99
	PERCENT PER ANNUM			
CANADA				
Prime Business Rate	7.50	7.50	7.50	6.50
Bank Rate	6.00	6.00	5.00	5.00
Long-Term Government Bond Rate (over 10 yrs)		5.56	5.63	6.25
Conventional Mortgages-1 Year		7.70	7.90	7.35
-5 Years		7.95	8.25	8.25
UNITED STATES				
Prime Rate	9.50	9.50	9.50	8.50
EXCHANGE RATES	CANADIAN $			
US Dollar	1.5109	1.5207	1.5389	1.4641
Japanese Yen	0.0132	0.0135	0.0139	0.0143
U.K. Pound	2.2526	2.2345	2.1707	2.3665
Euro	1.4060	1.3606	1.3052	1.4809

	FORECASTS - 2000			FORECASTS - 2001		
	REAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT	UNEMPLOY-MENT RATE	CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	REAL GDP	U RATE	CPI
	% CHANGE	PERCENT	% CHANGE	% CHG	%	% CHG
BRITISH COLUMBIA						
B.C. Government (September 2000)	3.0	7.2	1.4	2.7	7.2	1.2
TD Bank (October 13, 2000)	2.9	7.2	1.9	3.0	4.2	2.5
WEFA Group (December 2000)	2.8	7.7	1.4	3.0	7.1	1.4
CANADA						
TD Bank (December 14, 2000)	5.0	6.8	2.7	3.4	6.6	2.7
WEFA Group (December 2000)	5.0	6.8	2.7	3.2	6.7	2.1
UNITED STATES						
TD Bank (December 14, 2000)	5.1	4.0	3.4	3.0	4.1	2.8
WEFA Group (December 2000)	5.2	4.1	3.4	3.2	4.6	2.7

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